Additionally, HBCSE has been involved in teacher orientation programmes in collaboration with a number of national networks of schools (Atomic Energy Educaiton Society, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan), National Council of Teacher Educators (drawing teacher educators from different States of the country) and several Non-Government organisations working in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh. It also has an ongoing project of orienting primary school teachers from the schools of Brihanmumbai Muncipal Corporation.

(d) The Teacher Orientation Programme organised by HBCSE are widely appreciated for their quality and effect. The Ashram school programme mentioned above was very beneficial for tribal pupils and resulted in improvement in students' performance as conveyed by the Government of Maharashtra.

Safety of Food Stuff

2620. MISS MABEL REBELLO: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) how much food stuff (quantity and money wise) have been saved from perishing by using the Atomic Energy Department's services during the year 2000-2001;

(b) the locations of these services;

(c) the food items exposed to radiation; and

(d) the elongated shelf life of these items?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY (SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE): (a) and (b) About four hundred (400) tonnes of spices have been processed in the year 2000-2001 in the only Technology Demonstration Plant set up the Department of Atomic Energy. These services are located at the Board of Radiation and Isotope Technology Complex, Vashi, Navi Mumbai.

(c) Onion powder, Chilli powder, Chilli whole, Turmeric powder, Bishop seeds, Nutmeg and Curry powder etc. have been subject to radiation.

(d) In the case of these items, irradiation is carried out for the purpose of hygicnization in order to destroy any micro organisms or food-borne parasites, rather than to increase the shelf life. Shelf life of food items such as onion can be extended by six to nine months by irradiation. A plant for irradiation of onions is being set up by the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) at Lasalgaon, Nashik District of Maharashtra.

Modernisation of Postal Services

2621. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to bring forward shortly a bill to modernise postal services in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the proposed law has been designed to take care in improving the quality of services and make them more consumer friendly and relevant to the needs and aspiration of the people;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) by when the new law is likely to be put in place?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. It is intended to effect comprehensive amendment to the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, to enable the Government to introduce services with customer-friendly features and make available the benefits of technological developments to the postal customers.